THE PLAIN VIEW

A Quarterly Journal
concerned with human relations and with the quality of living

SPRING 1950

What We Mean by Humanism — H. J. BLACKHAM
The Possibility of Peace — M. L. BURNET
The International Organization of Humanism — J. HENRY LLOYD
Richard Jefferies — G. I. BENNETT

Commentary, Book Reviews, and Correspondence

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THE ETHICAL UNION

(Incorporated)

President: Sir Richard Gregory, Bt., F.R.S.

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THE PLAIN VIEW

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Ὦ ὀλίγον οὐχ ἱκανόν, ἀλλὰ τούτῳ γε οὐδὲν ἱκανόν. —EPICURUS

The man who is not satisfied with little is satisfied with nothing

UBERTATES ET COPIAE VIRTUTIS —CICERO

the productiveness and the resources of human quality

THIS IS THAT WHICH WILL INDEED DIGNIFY AND EXALT KNOWLEDGE, IF CONTEMPLATION AND ACTION MAY BE MORE NEARLY AND STRAITLY CONJOINED AND UNITED TOGETHER THAN THEY HAVE BEEN; A CONJUNCTION LIKE UNTO THAT OF THE TWO HIGHEST PLANETS, SATURN THE PLANET OF REST AND CONTEMPLATION, AND JUPITER, THE PLANET OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND ACTION. —BACON

What the plain view perceives is neither obvious nor obscure

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COMMENTARY

THE THIRD FORCE. Social Democrat was the name used by Lenin to distinguish the instructed revolutionary marxist socialist from the trade unionist or socialist of another persuasion. The name, like many another, has changed its employment and now works for the parliamentary socialist parties of western Europe. But it may be used in an extended sense to apply to all persons and parties that are loyal to democratic procedures and accept the modern welfare state as an inevitable object of policy. The historical divisions which separate the churches make little sense to-day, although there is no prospect of union, and similarly the lines which to-day separate democratic political parties, fractions, and groups, deeply divided by the past, are blurred by the threat or promise of dictatorship by parties on the extreme left and right. This middle medley has been called the Third Force. The search for a common political faith and ground of action which would constitute such a Third Force has been an interminable discussion, perhaps not altogether empty. The need for assertion and common action is specially urgent where the Christian Democratic parties are in a dominant position and exposed to the temptations of power. But the divisions of the past are only healed by the long future, and what is in question is the present moment and its dangerous possibilities..

The term "third force" confesses the weakness of the policy it expresses: it is the desperate hope of surviving and intervening between mighty opposites, the Soviet Union and the United States; or, in another context, marxism and catholicism. A steadier vision must recognize that the near future has room for only two alternatives, communism and what may be well called social democracy. Those who for any reason cannot or will not throw in their lot with the communist parties must labour to make a success of the second alternative. There is no Third Way. The defeat of fascism has been as decisive as anything can be in human history.. Capitalism and catholicism, tough as they are, do not at present occupy the fascist camp, except in the eyes of those whose vision is stereotyped. The swift and extraordinary changes of recent years have made social democracy more than the gospel of a party, and more even than a type of national society: it has become a long-term international policy embracing and unifying domestic and foreign policy. A British government, if it has any consistent policy at all, is bound to strive first and last to make social democracy a success at home and abroad. For in the modern world imperialism is politically impossible and the trade cycle has to be controlled, and

this requires international planning and economic co-ordination and integration: neither autonomy nor free trade can bring anything but ruin. The difficulties are formidable because established habits and settled expectations have to be overthrown and replaced without revolutionary means. A problem of leadership and incentives has been set and not yet solved.

Does social democracy in this context mean socialism? As well ask, does christianity mean catholicism? It does to some. It means a common faith in the empirical approach of democracy. It means acceptance of social equality and the creation of a common interest as objectives of policy. It requires a planned economy and the common ownership of large sectors of industry. In Britain, that is already common ground, by conviction or necessity. Those who resent their loss of privilege talk of the loss of initiative and incentive and the evil of bureaucracy; but these are the problems of the case, not the wanton results of mischievous policies. The road to serfdom is the road back. It is lamented that as a people we have become patients in a public institution and have lost the self-reliance and hardihood of the entrepreneur and the pioneer. If it is so, it is grievous indeed. But in the people who make this lament there is none of the spirit lamented, for the spirit of the entrepreneur is prompt and resourceful adaptability, and where it exists it is turned to new tasks and new calls and has no time or need to lament. There never was such urgent demand for such qualities in the nation's history, for only adventurous and inventive administration and political and industrial leadership can solve our problems and those of the nations with whom our lot is cast. We are too close to see clearly what great things have already happened, and instead of being encouraged we have become bewildered and depressed. If this mass of moral resistance, resentment, dejection, frustration could explode in a popular agitation to push on the next steps, that would be one of the most memorable and decisive events of history, fit sequel to the defeat of Hitler.

GOETHE AND BYRON. Although a day after the fair, we cannot let the bi-centenary of Goethe's birth go by without making our salute to (perhaps) the greatest of modern humanists. Of the many aspects of the man, we select for recall his relations with Byron. They never met and had to do with each other for the most part through intermediaries. Goethe was fascinated by Byron, first by the personality, later by the poet. Byron, able, as he says, to swear potently in German, but of the *real* language knowing absolutely nothing, indolently but genuinely accepted Goethe as the Great Man of Germany and of European letters. He proved his

regard by dedicating several of his pieces, beginning with the preposterously facetious and confessedly flippant dedication of *Marino Faliero* which he subsequently instructed Murray to omit. Goethe, on his part, when he had news of Byron's death, put his account of their relations on record in a note that for its pomposity is not less preposterous.

Much more sensible and interesting are the opinions of each other to be found in Byron's letters and conversations and in Goethe's *Conversations with Eckermann.* Byron in his nonchalant way feels an affinity with the other in personality and in writings, and is flattered by Goethe's continued interest in him and his productions. Goethe reads Byron's work eagerly, and is prepared to let him stand for England's entire poetical reputation—Shakespeare excepted. What was the fascination? It is not only an Englishman that loves a lord. Goethe, although a conscious embodiment of the rising and ruling middle class, was susceptible to the splendours of aristocracy. Indeed, it was the part of the middle class to reform and redeem the aristocratic regime, as it was the part of the middle years to steady and mature the romantic extravagance of youth. This theme is Goethe's preoccupation. Look at a picture of Goethe in the thirties and you see the virile beauty and reckless vitality of a stronger Byron. Byron goes off the rails, which makes him the darling of Continental romantics; Goethe keeps the track by a real effort of sustained self-discipline, which makes him a humanist. But in the other man he sees his own self, his renunciation. Hence the inconsistency of his judgments on Byron. Sometimes Byron is the astonishing genius whose like has not been seen. Even more often, Goethe penetrates to the truth: sees the Englishman as in reflection a child, sees the Greek adventure at its true worth, recognizes that his premature death has not curtailed his literary achievement.

Goethe had the curious literary opinion that Byron's genius and vocation lay in dramatizing the Old Testament, and he added in a conversation with Crabb Robinson, "You must not take it ill; but Byron was indebted for the profound views he took of the Bible to the *ennui* he suffered from it at school." Such a judgment from a supreme critic goes to show the blank cleavage between points of view even within the territory of one culture. The German found that "the preceding centuries failed to afford any similar example, and the elements required in order to calculate so eccentric an orbit were entirely wanting"; whereas to an English eye the orbit lies within the stable system of Pope, and it is other bodies that plunge into the eccentric courses which make the romantic movement.

THE HORSE'S MOUTH. Mr. Dalton, in a speech complaining of a tendentious and plutocratic Press, agreed with the opinion of Mr. Gladstone (or was it Mr. Bright?) that the platform will always beat the Press. This opinion expresses a well-known prejudice of the public. It is well known, for example, that tipsters always claim to have got their information straight from the horse's mouth, since there can be no doubt that backers would much rather listen to the horse however halting than to the tipster however racy. In the same way, the interest of the public is heavily biased in favour of choosing to hear about policies made in the cabinet however unfortunate instead of policies made in editorial offices however happy. This consumers' preference for the spoken word builds up sales resistance, although it does not noticeably cramp editorial style. Mr. Gladstone assuredly did not mean that the voice is mightier than the pen. Of course what Mr. Gladstone really did say, or did mean, will always provide a happy five minutes in any political speech. As for Mr. Bright, Cobden remarked that if he talked till doomsday he could not surpass the eloquence of twenty years' achievement, with an absolute lack of success. Cobden himself saved Bright's oratory from the editor of *The Times* and with a vengeance carried the war into the enemy's camp, directly and indirectly doing more than any man to make editors think twice before inventing darling passages in the speeches they report, to give rapture to their right of free comment.

Amongst the stock themes of Literary and Debating Societies one used always to find some such motion as this: That the Press to-day exerts greater influence than the Pulpit. For opposite reasons, nobody to-day or in the 17th century could get up a debate on this theme. But present-day readers of *The Times* might be excused for asking what the difference is. When the government has been lectured on its duty to the nation, and the opposition not less severely warned of its own shortcomings, and Mr. Pollitt printed at the head of the correspondence, could the headmaster in the school chapel do more? As for the editors of more popular papers, although they prefer the facetious and the ironic to the parsonic, they have constant readers (if MASS OBSERVATION is to be believed) whose devout attention could not possibly be surpassed in any congregation: for when it is believed that the *Daily Mail* supports the Labour Party, the work of edification by the word can go no further.

But, what of the platform and the Press? The debate continues. For the stock themes on which debating tyros exercise their jaws, like the rubber bone which contents the modern dog, are subjective subjects, capable of being chewed but not digested, and because incapable of being assimilated, endlessly useful for promoting the flow of saliva.

WHAT WE MEAN BY HUMANISM

I

ANY modern form of humanism gets its character in the first place from what it does with its own great inheritance. For humanism is a permanent possibility, one of the abiding alternatives offered to human living. One may reject it, but it is not an error which can be exposed, a fallacy which can be exploded once for all. Like the church, it is a decision, a commitment, a faith, a concourse of believers compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses. Indeed, humanism sees in the entire age its own image, for it is the slow growth of secular self-confidence, freeing itself during centuries from tutelage and authority, nerved by science to break the enchantment of the incomparable classical past and turn to even more dazzling prospects in the open future: it is this secularism, this religion of progress, which has come to be called humanism. And it is this humanism, this confident impulse in men to take charge of their own destiny, which has received a check in the events of our time. The apparent set-back to historical progress has been a call to new reflection upon the course of human experience and will lead to profounder forms of humanism.

To identify humanism wholly and solely with the weaning of modern man would, however, be a great mistake. It is a permanent possibility in the fullest sense, an alternative which will disclose itself in any culture. In the Graeco-Roman world of the classical past, the strongest representative of humanism was Epicurus, a dim figure to-day, but for six centuries a dominant influence in the lives of men, when the resounding names of Plato and Aristotle echoed only feebly in the quibbles and squabbles of the philosophical schools. Let three quotations suffice to show that the roots of humanism are deep and ineradicable. "Nature is her own standard, one thing throws light on another." The whole principle of empirical science is in that sentence, and it is to this simple principle that science has repeatedly to be recalled. "Nothing arises in order that we may use it, but what arises has its uses." That is to say, there is no purpose in the universe but there is value: we enjoy music and use steam engines without dreaming that these are the true purposes of sound and steam, or that anything has any purpose —a recognition which undermines the whole structure of Platonic and Aristotelian thought. "Nothing satisfies the man who is not satisfied with a little." This moral truth exposes the vanity of thinking that one could be happy in the future or the elsewhere if one is unable by wise choice and avoidance to be happy here and

now. Moral ruin does not only mean the corruption of vice, but also the incapacity to find satisfaction in the only life we have: this is a total loss for which there cannot in principle be any compensation in the future or elsewhere. These three Epicurean sayings suffice in themselves for a humanist philosophy, and can never lose their point.

II

Humanism is not in the first place a doctrine, for it is a passion. A child that has scope, security, and encouragement lives in an ecstasy of finding, doing, having, and being. In this active response to the world, as in the historical upsurge of human self-confidence and enterprise in the modern age, is the massive indispensable basis of humanism. But the check comes, and when it comes humanism as reflection and teaching begins. What happens when the incomparable impulse of childhood is spent? Too often, nothing better than the long decay of stale, flat, and unprofitable years. The story covered by these words may run in many ways, equally bleak and bad: ruts and routines, terrifying boredom, sickening frustration and disillusion, cold abhorrence and revolt. When personal life breaks down in the question, What is it all for? or when at the outset the adolescent asks, What shall I do with my life? then the alternatives branch out. You can go more than half-way to meet the worst that can happen, like Buddha, the stoic, or any of the great ascetics and world-renouncers, who insure against probable evil and inevitable death by refusing to count on the world for anything good (and thereby themselves create a type of good). You can move into the world of the imagination, like the lunatic and the poet, perhaps seeking like Wordsworth to recapture in the consolation of images the lost raptures of youth. You can accept the consolations of religion and focus all the interest and hope of your life on a transcendental world which gives meaning to this one. You can devote yourself to a cause whose triumph will change everything. You can harden your shell and go all out for material success and the glittering prizes. You can whoop, "The world's my oyster, which I will open with my sword," like the roistering hero of picaresque fiction. These are some of the main interpretations which have haunted human living for centuries. From the point of view of humanism, they are all illusions, not possible ways of living human life, but ways of escaping from it, although, as Nietzsche pointed out, they bring in their own forms of beauty and value.

The humanist alternative is to say Yes to life in the world as we find it here and now, to accept it unconditionally, and to make

oneself responsible for it and identified with it. What does this mean in practice? To see the world with an open eye (even in the hour of prosperity) and say Yes to it as it stands requires a drastic revision of one's own inevitable demands. The ascetic calls his will off altogether, as a man might call his dog from the hopeless pursuit of a rabbit. He renounces his claims on the world because he renounces the world. He renounces the world because it offers him no final good. The humanist says Yes to the world because it contains and offers him all final good. He cannot renounce the world, but in order to enjoy the world he must renounce his claims, that is to say, qualify and abate them. For our secret desires from an impartial point of view look fantastic. We all of us make ourselves the centre, and are interested in the world as the theatre of our own performance. We are not all naïve enough to show it: that is the stuff of classical comedy. This undying attitude is fatal and must be broken, because it shuts us up in our fantasies and closes the world against us. It can never be broken once for all, but an early conquest can be made and issues in a great relief and release bringing the blessing of independence and the power to live beyond oneself. We all need appropriate places and parts in the world, but mainly as a means of participation in the world by which we do take responsibility for it and identify ourselves with it. Thus the humanist does not cultivate non-attachment in order to keep himself apart from a world of cheats and delusions, he strives to become disinterested in order to become capable of interests beyond his own. What he has to break is not his attachment to the world but his rooted tendency to make himself the moral centre of the world: he does not abandon his claims because he would abandon the world, he abandons himself because he would embrace the world. How do we know that the world which we hope to experience by this venture will prove worth while? We never can know; but we never can enter the world on any other terms, and until we have entered we can make no judgment at all that is worthy of the slightest attention. When we say Yes to the world as it stands here and now we jettison our nearest and dearest hopes and venture out to seek the tide which takes us far from the shallows and miseries. There is, then, required as a first step a moral conversion and an act of faith.

III

The use and enjoyment of what life in the world offers is not to be had by waiting nor merely by asking, but only by intelligent, instructed, and sustained effort. It is obvious that in the intellectual field one has to equip oneself with the necessary techniques and

labour for the instrumental attainments before one can use mathematics or enjoy Greek literature; and it is no less obvious that the arts are closed against those who will not take the trouble to make a pilgrim's progress, and that games impose the need for acquired skills, and that health itself is a conquest and even friendship and social relations require skill, effort, and experience. In a phrase, culture is cultivation. Without cultivation, life is primitive, bleak, and blank. It offers nothing to those who come with empty hands. In that sense we get what we deserve, and character is destiny. Is the effort worth while: what is it all for? An unanswerable question because there is no neat separation of ends and means. Games are for the sake of health and social intercourse, and for their own sake; health is good in itself and the basis of other achievement. Everything that is good is really good and is bound up with something (and everything) else. The web is unbroken. There is no final platonic good which justifies all and makes everything fall into place. It is the whole enjoyed complex of human life in space and time that is the end, the sole justification. Within this, everything offers itself to use and enjoyment, and to new uses and enjoyments, in public and private patterns of fulfilment. But all this does not happen without the husbandry and economy of the good life, the employment of virtues and skills, attainments and techniques, duties and disciplines. There is no end short of the whole economy of the good life. If Virtue is made the end, or Truth, everything is undermined. Research for its own sake is a buffoonery, a servitude, a stupor; truth if it be not found and used is the worst of superstitions. And virtue cultivated for its own sake is monstrous behaviour that spoils all because it has lost sight of all. The part of culture is to sustain the spontaneous impulse of human living and carry it forward to its consummation in a complete life. If we become the slaves of our objective standards and elaborate organizations, that is the modern tragedy.

IV

Allowing for all that can still be learned from Epicurus, the modern humanist ideal is far from being the simple moral ideal of antiquity, namely, serenity, self-sufficiency, for the sake of freedom. Serenity may be purchased at the price of apathy or in exchange for truth, which would be the ruin of humanism. Even Epicurus, at his own price, paid too dearly. Modern humanism has a different orientation; its ideal is the plenitude of experience. This experience is not just the experience of life which one happens to have had, nor is it one's own attitude to the experience which comes to one: it is an experience which one constructs. Humanism in its full

compass is a deliberate creation of a complete experience of the world.

The world itself is not, so to speak, out there waiting to be experienced. It is not a finished world, a block universe, as William James put it, but a universe pursuing its adventures. The adventures are not only cosmic adventures beyond history and human adventures within history, but also interior adventures within personal life. What we are offered in an advanced civilization is not raw materials but highly worked products, not steam and sound but music and engines. Even so, these civilized products are raw materials in each new personal life, inviting incessant expansion and variation, playing a different part and having a different value in the context of each human existence. Everything useful and enjoyable offers new uses and enjoyments created in new contexts of living. We don't bring our ideals to the world and complain that they can't be realized. We get our ideals from a study of the real; they are the possibilities in things, what we find them capable of becoming. The bull-dog is hardly a creature the dog fancier would have dreamed of on his own; by prolonged selection he gradually learned to see him and worked to get him. Properly, ideals are not romantic and erroneous notions about the real, they are inspired by loving and intimate acquaintance with the actual, and are therefore promised to persistent effort. This kind of idealism is the mainspring of love, heroism, and creative art. More than anything else, humanism means working with and within nature in this sense, the fruitful interaction of the ideal and the actual, the dialectic of mind and matter. The ideal which controls the natural process is itself suggested and continuously corrected by the natural process. This is an extension into the field of values of the fundamental principle of empirical science, "Nature is her own standard, one thing throws light on another." The principle holds good in the most ambitious and in the simplest adventures in human living, in the administration of the nation's business as in a day's housework, in the origination of a new style as in the education of a child.

V

In saying Yes to the world as it stands here and now, we are saying No to God-the-creator, purpose-in-things, and heaven-at-the-end. That is regarded by some humanists as a painful necessity forced on us by honesty. They would say that by comparison with christianity humanism can only pretend to be making the best of a bad job, since it would obviously be much better to have God, purpose, and heaven, if only we could. This is just as short-sighted as to say that it would be very nice to have a fairy godmother or to

be able to have one's cake and eat it. The more one reflects upon notions of God, divine purpose, and a life for human beings beyond the conditions of human existence, the more one recognizes that they are riddled with contradictions. These cardinal tenets of religious faith are to be rejected not merely because the evidence for them is weak but mainly because, so far from giving significance to human existence, they make nonsense of it. As plainly and precisely as fairy godmothers and indestructible cakes, they stand over against our human experience and are incapable in principle of being assimilated to it: they do not interpret our experience, but are either irrelevant to it or destructive of it. Taken seriously, *and reflectively*, they would drive man mad. It is well known that Engels claimed that he and Marx had taken Hegel's dialectic of the concept and placed it on its feet again by deriving it from the general laws of motion. Similarly, and with much greater justification, we might take Anselm's famous ontological proof of the existence of God, which is standing on its head, and turn it right way up, for it is more cogent to argue from existence to perfection than from perfection to existence. This is the form of the argument: if we can think of a perfect being, it would be a contradiction to think him deficient in existence; we can think of a perfect being; therefore he exists. To turn it right way up: if we can think of the perfection of what exists, it would be a contradiction to think it replaces what exists; the conceptions of supernatural religion do replace human existence; therefore they cannot be thought of as perfecting it. Without playing with formulas, suffice it to say that the idealization of human life in the world, on the foregoing principle of idealization as prompted and controlled by the real, is something very different from the shattering interpretation of religion.

VI

Nor can the humanist accept idealization in the form of projecting a paradise on earth which will be realized in the future of history. This ideal is inadmissible not because it may not be realized, but simply because it cannot be realized. There can be no time when all problems will have been definitively solved and all human wills reconciled in sustaining a regime of unbroken harmony. A once for all achievement is not possible. The meaning of human life is in the transience of its achievements and failures. This does not mean that the pursuit is all and the success of attainment a cheat—as, like Stendhal, some have held. The pursuit is good, the attainment both possible and incomparable; it is for this reason that failure is tolerable, in so far as it is the greatest of incentives and drives us to lay hold of the possibility with the intensity of idealism.

Attainment, failure, and idealism belong inseparably together. It is nothing against enjoyments and achievements that they are transient: there would be everything against them if they were not, for non-existence is the only alternative to transience. Life means perpetual death in order to be life. Of course achievements can be sustained, but only by becoming new achievements.

It is a mistake to think of life as a succession of wonderful moments, peaks of experience, good states of mind, which Walter Pater and others made the ideal of the generation they influenced. Life is a complex whole and all parts of it are good and inseparable. Personal existence is a sequence of interpenetrating phases: the most obvious of them bear the names infancy, childhood, adolescence, maturity, retirement. Each has its own appropriate interests, activities, pursuits, and joys; lived well, each contributes to and involves all. There may or may not be a grand objective, a dynamic style of purposive living, and even if there is it should not be allowed to destroy the independent quality of each phase: the life of the person lies in the whole sequence, and is not to be seized in any moment of consummation. The construction of a complete experience, the realization of a personal ideal, is lifelong and does not wait for the end nor dispense with the beginning, but has a continuous value and a virtual completeness. All real good is final good, an absolute experience. A fine performance of a Mozart quintet perishes in the moment of its achievement, but it is not like weaving ropes of sand; it is the expressive gesture of a living world which can produce the plenitude of final good unceasingly. To long for the eternal and immutable is to turn away not merely from the here and now of human existence, but also from the absolute principle of living; it is to turn one's face to the wall and choose non-existence. For enjoyments could not last longer than they do on earth. As for the limited span of our own lifetime, it is not strictly the years that bring us to an end, but rather our own commitment and self-definition. If we choose certain possibilities and renounce the rest and become something definite, we exhaust those possibilities and do all we are capable of; in will and character we follow the cycle of our bodies and become worn out. Then we perish like every achievement. The only alternative is to die without having lived: to see that at the end of life is the bitterness of hell.

VII

If humanism requires not merely self-restraint but a radical shift of interest from the self to the universal, if it requires the acquisition of skills, qualities, and technical attainments as the instruments of good living, and if the creation of a complete experience means the

enlargement of ourselves and the world by the creative use and enjoyment of things, prompted and controlled by ideals which spring from experience of the actual, then, humanism requires and implies civilization. Indeed, civilization stands in the face of personal life as its organized possibilities, an inherited complex of institutions, instruments, and meanings spread out before it, indicating and inviting the ventures which make human living. Like language, all the other inherited achievements and organized meanings of civilization have to be acquired again in each personal life, and in use and enjoyment are recreated, modified, and developed, or degraded. Civilization is the human meaning given to the world, constantly modified, and from it we derive meanings for our personal lives. In the constant give and take is the authenticity of our lives, ever threatened with suffocation under the accumulation of the past and the organization of the present.

The endless debate about the relation between the individual and the state obscures this primary truth about man in society. Civilization is the complex of enjoyed human activities, rooted in the means which sustain them, and upheld, protected, and promoted by the spontaneous loyalty of those who participate in them. In the small community (notably in the happy school or in Periclean Athens) this is easy to see. To form one's whole conception of society upon this model, however, is to become an anarchist, like Tolstoy, and think that government is a tyranny only needed to enforce injustice, since where there is happy participation of all in enjoyed activities each is jealous guardian of the common order and restraint and constraint by an authority can only mean the imposition of what would otherwise be resisted and rejected. This conception is also implicit in marxism, for it is the mission of the dictatorship of the proletariat to establish a common and equal order of society in which government will dissolve into administration and the state wither away. The conception is useful and necessary as an ideal limit; to which in a small community there can be a happy approximation. It was the social ideal of Diderot and of Shelley, and even of Epicurus, who realized it negatively by withdrawal from the world with his friends and by renunciation of all desires which involved competition and struggle. But men are prone to take short views, and neither self-interest nor the common interest has proved a sure foundation for society. Government is not really in principle unjust. It is significant that it has been plausibly argued both that it is a conspiracy of the strong against the weak and that it is a conspiracy of the weak against the strong. Government may be either or neither. At bottom it is an expedient, a convention, a device, since order is the first necessity. What order

there shall be, however, is never a matter of indifference, and seldom a matter of universal agreement. The point for the humanist is that the social ideal, like other ideals, emerges from the actual conditions. In saying Yes unconditionally to the world here and now, the humanist says Yes not only to nature but also to the historical community in which he finds his life. He takes responsibility for it and identifies himself with it; but that does not make him a political conservative. Whether he is a conservative or a socialist, he must say No to the romantic naïvety of 19th century revolutionary idealism. Experience proves that revolutions more often than not create worse problems than they solve. By virtue of drawing his ideals from experience of the actual he is an empiricist, and starts with his natural existence and his historical community. What exists can only be maintained by being changed, and the venture into the future is always a choice of possibilities. The practicable alternatives are as actual as the present facts: what is to guide the humanist in his choice of the future? He can only try to foresee the probable consequences of each practicable alternative, and on that ground decide between them for the sake of civilization interpreted as the fullest opportunity to create a complete experience of one's own and to participate in the experience of others. Civilization is never abstract; it is always fully concrete and present with what it offers for use and enjoyment. Use and enjoyment of present possibilities is the source of future possibilities. In the age that is passing, a dynamic society founded on self-interest, contract, and mobility (laissez-faire) offered unequalled scope to not a few, but it is no longer a practicable alternative. Nevertheless the future is safer in the hands of those who have a lively appreciation of the virtues and efficiencies of laissez-faire, as well as of its defects and deficiencies, than in those of reactionaries who would restore a society based on status, or of utopians who define their good by rejection of what is here and now. The distinction of original marxism was that it had this lively appreciation, but as a doctrinaire faith it hasn't the empirical idealism which alone can guide the humanist in making his individual decisions in the actual situations.

VIII

The humanist prescription for the good life, then, is an open orientation of the self, responsive to the world, affirming it and taking responsibility for it, and by use and enjoyment of the actual and the present venturing into the ideal and the future, enlarging both self and the world in the construction of a complete personal

experience. Such a prescription applies equally well to a great career on the grand scale and to ordinary living in the humblest way. Even the attainments and acquirements which are indispensable to good living may be quite modest skills and common virtues, if they are exercised mainly in the use and enjoyment of what is there, as well as in dealing with difficulties and problems and in the endurance of the irremediable. The point is that the world of experience is inexhaustible, and that it is the created product of ourselves and nature, which is the meaning of inherited culture. We can only enter into it by recreating and developing it, following our aptitudes, interests and capacities. We can begin anywhere, with a modest or a brilliant personal equipment (there are advantages and disadvantages in both), and we can always go further. The outcome of the experience we create for ourselves is what we ourselves become, our own personalities: and for this reason a personality may be the most delicate and fascinating thing in the world. But it is an achievement: a humanist personality is not the mere result of refusing to believe in christian dogmas, any more than a christian personality is the result of giving assent to them. The humanist is constituted a humanist not by subscription to any belief or membership of any association but in his own person as the product of a humanist interpretation and experience of the world. He is ineffaceably a humanist, or not at all. The great exemplars of humanism are humanists as the great exemplars of christianity are saints, by choice, commitment, and discipline, by self-creation through the experience into which their interpretation of life leads them.

The good life is the existing civilization with its present and future possibilities. It is on these existing conditions and by selection from these present possibilities that the good life is to be lived at any time. To say this is a mockery of the plight of those who have no opportunity to live the good life, crushed or enslaved by the present organization of the world, unless humanism is urgently concerned to bring that opportunity to everybody. Indeed, it is the mission of humanism not only to interpret the world but also to change it. The message of humanism is an intolerable insolence to many if it comes to them from the mouths of humanists who are not striving with all their mind and will to make it everywhere possible to practise their teaching. Granted this, the teaching itself leaves the practice of the good life wide open to choice and vitality. There are many ways of living well. The good life is everything that a civilization affords. It is essential to humanism that its prescription is open and does not set up a chief good or a hierarchy of values. It is for each to create his own

experience and participate in that of others. Of course there is hardly a limit to what may be done to stimulate and inform wise choice and avoidance, but that is exemplification not obligation.

H. J. BLACKHAM

THE POSSIBILITY OF PEACE

IF we are to be in the position to advocate peace on all occasions we must be in a position to assure that the circumstances are such that peace is preferable on all occasions. There can and have been cases where the good in war outweighs the evil. The aggressive instincts are by no means altogether evil; it is the same instinct that bids one resist as bids one attack. It is due to the aggressive instincts that there is the possibility of freedom; docility produces tyranny. There can be nothing more destructive to the possibility of the continuance of the human species than universal docility, not even atom bombs. Our ideal must be controlled men and women, not passive types. I think that resistance to Nazism was a good thing. I think that Finnish resistance to the Soviet was a good thing, though I must admit that I did not think so in 1939 and '40; I think the survival of the Finnish people as a creative community was due to their resistance. Although an Englishman is the wrong person to make the assertion in the light of the events of Munich, I think that the failure to resist Nazism in 1938 lost to Czechoslovakia the possibility of a creative role; not that she could have long stood out against the Nazis in the field, but resistance would have provided her with spiritual reserves.

Not only is war sometimes the lesser evil, it often brings positive satisfactions to many people. Yet to see these satisfactions at their true worth one has to see the whole picture, not merely the comparatively rosy picture of one victor power. What of Germany, what has been the effect of a second great defeat in a generation? Then there is Russia, is there any validity in the formal acceptance of her as a victor power? What of the many millions dead and the vast material destruction? Is it merely a coincidence that many backward traits have developed during, immediately before, and since the war in Russia? In many ways Russia was a progressive country up to about 1935 when Nazi Germany became a major menace to her. From that time there has been a progressive decline there in freedom of thought, in internationalism of outlook, in ideas of social equality, and in the belief in the objectivity of science. It may be arguable that bolshevism always had within itself seeds of tyranny and oppression, but if so the war and the threat of war has proved a proficient germinating medium. The first world war

produced both bolshevism and what for the want of a better name is known as fascism, the latter in a variety of instances. On one's evaluation of bolshevism and fascism will depend, or probably should depend, one's judgement on the utility or disutility of peace in the present situation. The Webbs thought that Communism was a new form of civilization, whereas many would call it a new form of barbarism, of whom I would be one; but I must say that I have been struck by an argument of Delisle Burns in *The First Europe* who in reference to the Christian period which accompanied the dissolution of the Roman Empire said that critics who compared that period with the Roman Empire itself were comparing a river at its mountain source with another about to enter the sea. This period of dissolution of the Roman Empire saw the birth of a new type of civilization, and a greater one, the fruit of which would be seen a thousand years later.

Will Communism be all right in a thousand years time, or five hundred years time? This may be the way we should look at the matter, but for most people, and particularly the humanist, it is not a very pleasing prospect to have to be content for comfort with the thought of what will appear centuries hence. While it is true that should our own civilization be disrupted it will not be the end of all things, and we should bear this in mind, humanist thought cannot survive through waiting centuries of darkness and disruption. Humanism requires fair weather for survival; unless one can offer the prospect of good conditions well within a lifetime, people will adopt apocalytic attitudes to life. We should not be defeatist and accept the view that of necessity civilizations should decay as well as rise. We have seen social changes in the past twenty-five or thirty years, though undeniably they have been assisted into being by the two wars, which should give the assurance that if the conditions for the renewal of our civilization can be diagnosed, the will is there, and the flexibility of public consciousness is such as to allow the necessary changes to be effected.

In contemplating the two world wars we must bear in mind that the United States, although a protagonist, was not completely exhausted by her participation and was able afterwards to give great help to her allies and even her enemies. It was this help that tends to obscure the full possibilities of the evil of war. The greatest evil of war is the destruction of the material basis upon which the culture of the civilization is based. To survive a war and to find one's civilization and standards of conduct unmaintainable is a possibility of experience that we in this country, at least, have not yet tasted. It is, however, on the cards. It only requires two equal groups of powers to be engaged in a war *à outrance* for

the economic basis on which their cultural standards are based to crumble away. A third world war may be that occasion.

It is one thing to decide that war is undesirable, even on non-pacifist and unsentimental grounds, and another to see means of preventing it. The situation has changed since the first world war in which the protagonists on either side shared common ideals and views on the organization of society. Under such conditions the argument could be put forward that culture as a whole and its preservation had a prior claim over any question of the relative weight of this power and that in European or world affairs. During and subsequent to the first world war regimes came to power which wanted to see our present civilization and current standards go. There is not the mutuality of interest amongst the great powers to-day that there was throughout the nineteenth century and in the twentieth before the coming to power of communism and fascism. There are people to-day who, although they may preach peace, teach the inevitability of war and the destruction of our present civilization. With such ideas abounding it is obvious that bodies such as the late League of Nations and the existing United Nations, which presuppose that the component nations are all after the same purpose, cannot be effective, at least in their main purpose.

A main factor in our failures in efforts for peace can be attributed to a failure to realize the nature of man, which is essentially competitive rather than co-operative. For thousands of generations man has lived in an environment which on balance has been hostile to him. The fauna and even the flora have been enemies. Man has lived in small groups surrounded by hostile groups; his nature has been moulded by restriction and competition. Of course, it is true that co-operation plays a part and always played a part in human life. Within the small group there was fierce affection, particularly when there was a direct threat from outside; and the group itself was broken down into family units in which affection rather than hate was the predominant feature. But the totality of the exercise of the hate instincts far outweighed that of the love instincts. Survival depended in such an atmosphere on an adequate development of the hate instincts. We have therefore inherited instincts which are not very appropriate to the types of civilizations of the past six thousand years which demand a high degree of co-operation. It would be well if we recognized the disparity between our nature and our requirements rather than take the attitude that because co-operation is necessary it is inherently evil to hate. We have to manage with our instincts as they are; but it would not even be desirable to have a more pacific type of nature, as it is important that man should have the capacity of hatred unimpaired though

its outlets need controlling. By the adoption of the attitude that hatred is evil one places the individual on the defensive. He himself cannot be unco-operative and hostile because that would be to admit that he is wicked, therefore he merely looks about to find reasons why the other person's conduct is such that co-operation is impossible. It would do no good even if the individual did consider himself evil; a society in which everybody was evil, even though conscious of the fact, would not be a very hopeful one. What is needed is the consciousness that one can correct one's natural impulses, but to do this and want to do this requires a real faith that co-operation pays. That faith is not widespread in the world to-day. To get that faith across is the task of peace organizations and should be tackled upon a basis of reason and humanism, and not of emotion and christianity as is so usually the case in Europe and the Western world.

Within national units we think in terms of competition and restriction, rather than co-operation and expansion, so that it is no surprise to find the same attitude adopted between nations. There have been attempts in the non-Soviet world towards co-operation during and since the war, but the old attitude prevails despite a vague desire for co-operation. It is a fact, too, that the motive behind co-operation has been the fear of possible Russian expansionism, or the revival of German expansionist ambitions, rather than any fundamental belief in the benefits of co-operation as such. The United States is propping up the economies of countries by Marshall Aid in order to stave off social revolution, though it is not to be questioned that there is a very real and genuine feeling of regard amongst Americans for the peoples with kindred ideas who were their allies. There has been a rising tide of nationalism for centuries past and never more strong than in the past thirty-five years. It may be that the peak has been reached at last. Any nation that manufactures comparable products to our own we regard as a competitor and we rather harbour the idea that we should be unique, that no other people should do as we do. One notices that the people of the Ruhr are increasingly expressive, as British rule relaxes, of the view that Britain is a competitor of her industries, and similar views are not unheard of in this country about the Ruhr. Yet we are in a world that is obviously under-industrialized if anything like a satisfactory standard of living is to be enjoyed. In Britain, the oldest industrialized country of the modern phase of industrialization of the past two centuries, where we naturally expect to find wants best met, we find shortages of the most crucial character: an insufficiency of electricity, houses without piped water, people without houses, and a crying need on

the part of almost every industry for capital for development. In Germany these needs are considerably greater than here, and if we consider the world at large we find countries where modern industrial development has hardly begun. We have the picture of a world in which great development of industry is necessary but at the same time a general consciousness that there is too much production. The United States has now become the apostle of freer trade, on a limited scale, but for the whole of her history as an independent nation she has been building herself into isolation.

If we can get it firmly into the general consciousness that every man and woman who wants or needs work can be usefully and profitably employed, and bear in mind that our natural instincts need offsetting when we get down to the practical job of co-operation, there seems no reason why our civilization should not be preserved and improved. When we get to the conference table we adopt a defensive attitude as a rule. We are frightened all the time that we are going to give something away. Roosevelt's son, describing a meeting between Roosevelt and Churchill, relates how his father told him that he knew what Churchill was after and how he would see that he was not going to get it. At the conference table we are so frightened that inadvertently we may give something away that the price of the agreement to negotiate is sometimes an agreement to disagree on the matters that are of any importance. Of course, there are things that it may be necessary to say No to in negotiating, but there would be fewer things to say no to if it was thought that negotiations took place for mutual benefit and were not the means of getting the better of another.

A hopeful factor for peace is the lessening of the desire to exploit weaker or less developed peoples which has been brought about by industrialization. Right up to the present period, if one wanted to have culture based upon specialization, exploitation was a necessity. If one wanted to do something that was not productive in the economic sense of the term it was necessary to deprive someone else of what they themselves had insufficient of. Civilization was built upon exploitation within the community, with the natural consequence of exploitation of one community by another where the opportunity occurred. With the aid of new techniques in industry it is possible to assure a reasonably good standard of living for the whole of a community. It is possible to replace the millions of slaves of a Roman Empire by an equivalent number of horsepower in industry. By far the most frequent cause of war has been the desire to exploit in some way neighbour peoples, and the removal of this factor enormously increases the possibility of maintaining peace. Without the drive to exploit, peace making is

reduced to something more in the nature of a technical problem, apart from the doctrinal wars and man's own inconvenient innate tendency to hostility. There are two reservations one must make to this optimistic outlook: (1) A reasonably good standard of living means simple living and not prestige living. If prestige standards have to be maintained then there is no hope of ever doing without exploitation. (2) A comparatively small proportion of the population of the world to-day live in communities that have anywhere nearly achieved the technical proficiency that can assure a good standard of living, and it may take a matter of one or two centuries, even with the best will in the world, to achieve such standards everywhere.

A factor that has to be borne in mind in connection with the industrialization of the world is that not every country has the means to become self-supporting in heavy industry. Resources of iron ore and coal found in abundant quantities in parts of the United States and Britain and in the Ruhr valley are not to be found in a number of countries, nor even on all continents. While every nation can become an industrial nation (light industry can flourish anywhere where there is population) there are limits to industrialization in some countries.

However, if a good and steady rate of expansion of production can be maintained there is a possibility of the urge to exploit being sidetracked.

As well as a real faith in the advantages of co-operation there must be the working out of the technique of co-operation in various spheres. If restrictive and competitive modes of thinking can be replaced by expansionist and co-operative modes the way will be open for action, but one must know how to work co-operatively. It is no good expecting the Ruhr blast furnaceman to maintain much regard for the ideal of co-operation if in fact he becomes unemployed because his firm is undersold by a South Wales one. There is needed a revolution in financial policy, and there is no doubt that a considerable degree of planning of international trade is necessary. Once it is found out that it is not necessary to make a profit in order to make a beneficial exchange there is no knowing to what length co-operation will be carried. The centuries-long trend towards independence, isolation, and autarky may be reversed. One may no longer read that some minor state or other has decided to split into a number of independent sovereign states with their own postage stamps and other benefits of separation.

There was recognition by Dean Acheson in a recent speech at the United Nations Assembly that diplomacy must get into workaday clothes. The days of the old congress or conference

where half a dozen men sat round a table and settled the affairs of the world is a theme for musical comedy or for the romantic vision of a Neville Chamberlain. Such methods cannot or should not work in a democratic world community; the basis of that sort of diplomacy is the despotic state where a handful of people can commit nations. When this sort of diplomacy is effective to-day it most likely means rival dictators making plans for aggression on smaller neighbours. This is not to say that there are not occasions when high-level political decisions must be taken by a few, but these decisions must arise from the living content and experience of relationships. No single man, or group of men, should have the right to say that you shall have certain relations with this nation or that. No higher political decision can have any validity without a great amount of practical work behind it. In the inter-war years we suffered from diplomacy in the grand manner. Foreign ministers and prime ministers met every few months. There is not a presentable looking city on the continent that was not the stage of an important inter-war years' conference. This Thomas Cook diplomacy must give way to a more practical approach. The experience of the post-war period has elements which are heartening. UNITED NATIONS has proved and could only prove a disappointment. It is the place for the register of disagreements rather than the thrashing of them out. The assemblies are used as a propaganda outlet. It is probably impossible for an effective organization to be devised for five dozen independent sovereign states. You have the dilemma of the Veto. The Security Council can work neither with nor without the Veto. It is often said that it is not the Veto but the misuse of the Veto that is the trouble. For my part, I think that it is as well that it has been clearly demonstrated as unworkable; it is better that a bridge should look thoroughly unpractical than that you should be deceived by outward appearance as to its serviceability. In saying this about UNITED NATIONS it is not meant in any way to attack the general propaganda work of the United Nations Associations. But we must look to closer economic and cultural relationships leading on to federation, rather than hold out the ideal of a multiplicity of individual states resolving their difficulties by debate and reason.

There are some grounds for hope in the experience of the past years in the development of co-operation. But there is an underlying assumption in some quarters that this co-operation is a temporary necessity and that we should get back to normality when it will no longer be needed. This is the most irresponsible drivel that could possibly be uttered. By "normal" is meant the pre-war position. The reality is that throughout the nineteenth

century and to the outbreak of war in 1914 a system of relationships was being built that was bound to lead to a situation in which it would not be possible to avoid war. No sooner was the first war concluded than there was a resumption of a way of living provocative of war. Looking backwards at the two wars one can note that in the second one there were powers that wanted war, but that that was not so with the first one, in the case of which the statesmen of the different nations were reasonable men. It would have needed a revolution in thought though to have brought the politician of that day within the bounds of a peaceful solution, and there was no stimulus to such a revolution of thought. We have had two world wars as stimuli to the required revolution and there are many still ready to accept the view that war is either bad luck or inevitable.

If we can get away from the idea that co-operation is merely a first-aid measure during the after conditions of war to save countries from sinking to lower standards of civilization, and look upon the co-operation so far manifested as a child's first tottering footsteps, there is hope for the future. We are in shoal water at present; twenty years of active and progressively increasing co-operation may take us into open water, but it must be borne in mind that navigation will be necessary even there. Peace is a dynamic thing.

When I speak of co-operation I do not mean merely that the United States should go on handing out dollars, though I think that this is quite a welcome phenomenon. There is a lot to be said for contributions being made by nations that are better off in regard to the development of technique or the possession of raw materials to the more backward or to those without great resources. One of the Yugoslav complaints against Russia is that she has traded upon a business basis instead of making allowance for Yugoslav's more backward development. In the past the more advanced nations have taken advantage and exploited the more backward; it may not be sufficient in the future merely to stop such exploitation and not afford positive help. In this connection, Point Four of the President's programme indicating the making available of assistance to backward peoples marks a revolutionary change (if it is to be followed up by action) from exploitation to subsidy. It will be an application of democracy in the economic field on the international level, an entirely new sphere for its operation. Western Union, and any other movements towards federation should be encouraged, but it is important that such unions should not be restrictive and exclusive. The analogy is often used of the formation of the United States as argument for Western Union. While, no doubt, enormous benefit has accrued as a result of the formation of the United States,

we do not want an isolationist state such as she has been right up to recent times. The wrong type of Western Union could be worse than independent states.

It will be said that the Soviet states are being overlooked. Yes, deliberately so. Soviet foreign policy is determined largely on their conception of what is going to happen in the non-Soviet world. They expect division and circumstances leading to a further war and the collapse, probably total, of what they term the bourgeois world. They have good reason to think this with the experience of the two world wars, and they will certainly be right about the third one unless we can push through a revolution in thought. If Russia can see that economic co-operation in the West is not merely a first-aid measure directed against her own expansion, which will shortly dry up, but is a permanent and dynamic thing, her attitude will change. It must not be thought because Russian propaganda speaks with one voice that there is only one opinion, or that that one voice always says the same thing. The most friendly relations possible should be maintained with the Soviet people and trade expanded, but at the same time it is no good deluding ourselves as to her outlook and intentions. There is a school of thought and action which makes a virtue of indiscrimination; I can see no virtue in it. With the pacifist the main motive in the overlooking of obvious tendencies to aggression is to create the situation where resistance will not be a possibility. One gets into a position where resistance is not a possibility because one has convinced oneself that there is nothing to resist. Also, with this type of thought there is the same fault as with the old pre-war diplomat, reliance on words. Agreements and contracts are worthless where there is no power to make the contracting parties comply, which is the case with agreements between sovereign powers, except where a power for practical reasons finds it convenient to build up a reputation for keeping them. The Soviet Union honours commercial contracts because it could not do business with the outside world without a reputation for meeting its obligations. In the main field of international relations the Soviet Union cannot conceal the fact that she considers war inevitable, nor her own practice of taking advantage of war for furthering territorial interests.

The Soviet-Yugoslav dispute has been valuable in underlining the fact that the division between East and West is one based upon power and not on ideology. The events of the past ten years should have been sufficient to demonstrate this (the Soviet-German Pact, the allies' support of the Soviet Union during the war and of communist groups in Yugoslavia), but there are still those who will insist that we are hostile to the Soviet Union because she is socialist.

There may be elements within the democracies who are so actuated, but they are not decisive. Does any thinking person really imagine that we should like to see Russia colonise Europe and the Mediterranean had she a tsarist or capitalist régime?

It may be a necessity for the West to reply to the propaganda of the East to prevent the acceptance in the world generally of the Marxist case, but it must be realized that it is merely a defensive move which will not make any positive contribution to peace. The motives of many who are pleased with the success of the counter-attack on the Marxist lines are not of the best. It would be a great mistake to delude ourselves that victory in the Cold War will take us any nearer to the attainment of peace. Nor can great armaments procure us peace. There is a tendency in some circles, and particularly is this true in North America, to place too much reliance on armaments and especially air armaments. Belief in vast bomber fleets is the new expression of the Maginot mind. If the possibility of war has to be envisaged it is better that a more dynamic strategy should be intended than the methodical reduction of all urban conglomerations to dust and ashes. This point of view has been taken recently by the Navy Department in the United States. No doubt they were actuated by the desire to see more money for naval armaments, but it is a valid point. Armaments may be a necessity to prevent the nations with the most unscrupulous politicians from dominating the world, but it would be a big error to think of armaments as the main assurance of peace. With regard to Britain's own armament position, it would seem desirable that as long as armaments are a necessity we should share a portion of their burden in order that we may have a voice in determining their possible use and the direction generally of foreign policy. There is a contradiction in those who argue at one and the same time for a reduction in our armaments and independence from American influence in our foreign policy.

With regard to the atomic bomb, can anything be done? Two things are fairly obvious, one that the Soviet states will not agree to inspection, the second that the United States will not agree to stop manufacture without inspection. There is very little possibility of any nation that had the secret of atom bomb manufacture not manufacturing were there no inspection, and therefore there seems a lot to be said against the Russian proposal of abolition. There is a strong probability if both parties engaged in a war have the secret and supplies of the bomb that they will not be used. It might be worth while entering into a covenant not to use the bomb, without reference to the question of manufacture. Nothing can be lost by doing so. The United States were in error in using the atom bomb against the Japanese.

To sum up the situation, we should say that while war is not inevitable, so far as mankind's history has progressed, peace in any permanent sense has not had a place in it. One needs to take a grave view of the question of the survival of our civilization. No civilization has so far proved permanent and the most likely cause of the termination of our own appears to be war. The termination of our own civilization would mean the disappearance of humanism for centuries, at least.

We must not be apocalyptically minded, however, like a Christian or Marxist. We have no scriptures that foretell the end of the world like the Bible or the end of a culture as does Marxism. It is probable that the apocalyptic type of thought and scripture has had much to do with bringing the downfall of civilizations. The captain, instead of being on the bridge in shoal waters, is in a stupor below. We can only be saved to-day by the correct exercise of our reason and will. We must have the faith that the determination of whether our civilization is to survive or not is within the competence of human purpose. No God or inexorable Marxist law has decided the course of events of the next few years. What we need is to be frightened, but into our wits not out of them. We must be made to realize that however effective we may conceive human conduct to have been up to the present time, a persistence in such conduct unaltered will lead to destruction. Another thing we must be made to realize is that the saving of civilization is a priority job. When things are not going well a common thought is that one is falling away from grace and the return to an earlier way of life is sought. It is not realized that that earlier way has led steadily to where one is to-day. There are others who would be interested in saving civilization had they not some more personal interest to attend to.

The way forward seems to lie through a revolutionary change from a competitive and anarchist mode of life to a co-operative and planned one. Much of this revolution in thought that is so badly needed in the West has already been achieved in the Soviet states. Unfortunately their views on the transition to socialism, their addiction to totalitarian practices, and their failure to free themselves from imperialist attitudes makes ready co-operation of the Western powers undesirable. Outside the bounds of the Soviet states lie however more than enough territories and peoples to build a democratic co-operative commonwealth. If Stalin put forward the slogan of 'Socialism in One Country,' we can put forward the programme of a democratic co-operative commonwealth in half the world. To be able to say that we have solved the problem of international relationships, we must find solutions for the relation-

ships between every category of nation. There is the relation between the nation with large resources in raw materials and the one with little. There is the relation of the nation with advanced technique and the nation where industrialization has hardly commenced. There is the relationship between nations at the same level of technique manufacturing comparable products. All these various categories of nations are to be found in our part of the world, that is to say, that which lies outside the Soviet sphere of influence. If we find solutions of all the problems involved in these international relations, or make a massive attempt towards their solution, we need not expect war with the Soviet bloc. Hitler only came to power because well-meaning people were unwilling to cope with the problems presented by the evolution of their society. I was going to say too idle to cope with the problems, but idleness is not the right expression. People are energetic enough but, like the general who has studied up the tactics and strategy of some earlier campaigns, they are not disposed to tackle the problems presented to them.

Some of the peoples of the world, and particularly is this true of Britain, have shown themselves capable of facing the internal problems produced by our developing civilization. There is social planning, for health, education, social security, town and country development, employer-employee relations; in all these fields some sort of progress has been made. If we can get the same sort of constructive thinking and feeling into international relations instead of indulging in word-mongering there is hope of survival. Beginnings have been made in economic co-operation in the post-war years; we must fan the flickering flames.

M. L. BURNET

THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF HUMANISM

Humanism

SOME comment must be made at the outset on the terms of this title. Humanism is being used in some ambiguous senses to-day, and like all such very general terms is liable to misuse and misunderstanding. In the periodical in which this article appears it should, however, be clear that I am using Humanism as a shorter and more attractive alternative for Ethical Religion, that view of man's relation to the cosmos and of his responsibility for his personal and social conduct which is derived from his own knowledge and experience. We have perhaps too little appreciated the value of a simpler, warmer tinge in the language we use to express the ideas that flow from the ethical ideal, especially in the efforts we make to attract others to the appreciation and support of the movement to which we belong.

Humanism then is presented in contrast to theistic religions derived from beliefs about supernatural beings and events. It must also be noted that Humanism is not only a body of belief created by man himself, but one that has been developed in a particular way, that of evolution and by the free and full use of reason which we sum up as the rational method. This stands in sharp contrast to the claims to supernatural revelations and the subordination of the reason to dogma and ecclesiastical authority which are embodied in most theistic conceptions of religion. On the negative side Rationalists have done much to discredit these claims, especially in their historical context. On the positive side, however, the Ethical Movement has rather inadequately presented the great body of evidence for the soundness of its alternative Humanist view of religion. This is available, not only in the living witness of every man with a freely working mind and conscience, but also in the "witness of history" which shows the development of moral ideas and their influence on man's personal and social life. Above all, the theistic religions themselves are compelled to give witness in that ethical core in them which alone gives them such human value as they possess and which has been built up as part of man's moral evolution.

Owing to the weakness of the "organized" Ethical Movement (as distinct from the ethical trends in the community) and the consequent inevitable limitations of its propaganda, together with the inadequacy of our public education in human history, there is a prevalent impression that Secularism, Freethought, Rationalism and the Humanist conception of religion are of modern origin. Actually

they are co-terminous with the history of man and have a universal application and appeal, of which we in the Ethical Movement have hitherto made little use. It is this international aspect and importance of Humanism on which I wish to dwell.

THE PRESENT POSITION OF RELIGION

Notwithstanding the persistence throughout the ages of the Humanist view of religion, and the increasing respect for the scientific method in the building up of men's knowledge of the external world and the working of their own minds, we have to face the fact that supernatural conceptions of religion still exert a profound influence. Why is this and what does it portend? It may well be that Theism is an inevitable stage in man's religious evolution just as the Mercantile and Capitalist epochs have been natural stages in his economic evolution. This is not the occasion nor is the writer the person to develop this point. Suffice it to comment that just as in modern societies there are no purely capitalist or socialist economies, but many mixed ones and nearly all exhibiting active signs of transition from one to the other, so in the realm of religion there are underlying tendencies, not yet dramatically visible, to a weakening in the hold of supernatural beliefs and a slower more vaguely felt acceptance of a rational basis for ethics. The anomalies and confusing complexity of the present situation are of striking significance to Humanists. There is this core of ethics in all the great religions, similar in essentials to the moral principles we have derived by rational process from secular experience and adequate, if applied, to solve our social and political problems. Yet because these ethics are wrapped up in so many supernatural garments and antagonistic creeds they serve only to confuse thought and action in a world where improved contacts and communications have increased our consciousness of conflicts of religious outlook, complicated as they are by profound cleavages of economic and political interest and variations in cultural level.

THE INTERNATIONAL ASPECT

At one and the same time as the world has been shocked into consciousness of the enormous capacity for self-destruction and political serfdom which modern methods of warfare and propaganda have rendered possible, we are faced with confusion of thought about human destiny and moral responsibility. In getting a proper orientation in this problem we in the west have no easier task than those in other parts of the world.. The majority of our people, so far as they consciously think of the problem at all, do so with assumptions of the predominance of the Christian view over

all others which are simply based on the fact that it is the only one of the world religions of which they have any real knowledge. It is just as easy for the Mohammedan, the Hindu, or the Buddhist to adopt a similar attitude in favour of his religion, and with as much or as little reason. Moreover, the decay of active faith in the theistic religions too often leads, not to a positive Humanism, but merely to a sterile negative attitude to religion. Therefore we have the result that not only is mankind divided by its religious beliefs but men differ in their degree of attachment to such beliefs and many have none. Accompanying this dissolving process is the clash of economic and political interests.

It is this accumulation of obstacles which frustrates every attempt at international understanding, whether it be on the political or economic field, in Art or Science, or in Religion. It is this apparently hopeless confusion of thought which leads to negativism and escapism and thus acts as a clog on every move to human progress. Within a few years of the catastrophe of the most destructive world war in history we have had the spectacle of the active production of atom bombs, the Hindu-Moslem conflict in India, the Jewish-Arab conflict in Palestine, the aggressive nationalist phase of Soviet-Communism and the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe, and an equally militant Roman Catholic participation in European politics. To avert the threat of political and economic chaos, world statesmen are reduced to devising measures which no informed man ranks higher than temporary expedients, such as Marshall Aid, Western Union, the Atlantic pact and Devaluation. The same must be said about such half-digested ideologies as "the American (or the democratic) way of life" or the so-called "Third Force," which French and other West European leftward parties naïvely formulated. All evade the fundamental issue which is just simply that mankind lacks an accepted common standard of moral values and a common moral ideal. Nor can the formulation and acceptance of such an ideal and standard be leisurely pursued. Awakened nationalist feeling stirs the peoples of Asia and Africa at the same time as European standards of living and political freedom are threatened, but mankind's only court of appeal is a United Nations Organization about which the only undeniable truth is that it is not united.

IS THERE A WAY OUT?

All this adds up to a dark picture which might well dispose the timid and half-hearted to despair, and a bewildering complex of forces and circumstances which it would appear hopeless to try to influence, much less to control. It is obvious that one has to select

one's starting point with special care in order to penetrate such a labyrinth. Is it not also equally clear that the greater part of this complexity arises from sectional interests and points of view in religion, politics, and economics and that the remedy consists quite simply in getting back to those bases of thought and action which are just human and therefore universal? However disregarded they may be, there *are* fundamental principles which have a universal application to personal and social life, and it is precisely in the neglect or defiance of these principles that most of our troubles have arisen. Much useful attention has been directed to the question of Human Rights: what is equally needed is attention to Human Duties, not only the duties of the individual citizen and worker, but the duties of politicians and statesmen, of employers and landlords, bishops, scientists, and all "in authority." This is the task of Humanism as *an* international religion; in the long term sense, *the only* international religion that man can make for himself, but in the meantime available as a means of co-ordination and co-operation between all the presently contending religions of man.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY

It is here that I come to the specific part and responsibility for action of the Ethical movement, as I see it. First, one must distinguish between the different senses in which that title may be used. There are the two groups of people, the organized membership in Ethical and kindred societies, and the much larger body of persons who are influenced by ethical ideas and thus unconsciously participate in "the movement" in a vague general sense. The organized movement has fluctuated between alternative views of its proper functions and is frankly concerned at its limited membership despite devoted propaganda. Doubtless it will continue its efforts to improve its methods of appeal, particularly in its primary field of building up a British Humanist movement. But I am here concerned with the wider view of its moral responsibility for collaboration with other bodies in the endeavour to place Humanism, which now exists as a vague general attitude, in the position of an organized world movement. Ethical Societies, being outside the sectarian struggle, yet having a positive approach to religion, are in the best position to take the initiative in this great task.

One has only to mention the Rationalist, Secularist and Freethought organizations to realize what a much more influential body might be created by more active co-operation. I say "co-operation" rather than "amalgamation" because it is not clear how far the members of these organizations are willing to accept a

more constructive attitude to the religious problem than the merely negative one of denouncing irrational beliefs. The same limitations of membership and funds affects all these societies and a frank facing of both principles and the facts of the situation must surely be felt desirable by all concerned. It has been a frequent sneer at the Christian Churches that they are so divided and so sectarian in their outlook: what can we of the rationalist and ethical point of view say to excuse *our* divisions? Similar separate organizations exist in the United States, where there is a Humanist Association as well as an Ethical Union and several rationalist bodies, and there is a like lack of co-ordination in other countries. The absence of an International Ethical or Humanist Union reflects the weakness of its possible constituents, while the recent International Conference of Freethinkers reveals by its title its preoccupation with method rather than ends. This indeed is the first practical question to be faced: whether those who have hitherto been content with the passive and rather negatively expressed rationalist method and attitude are willing to take the further and positive step of committing themselves to a rational Humanist ethics. Such a step would appear to be a logical development of rationalism applied to the problem of human conduct, but it is one of personal and group choice which we of the Ethical movement can only invite but cannot constrain.

OTHER POSSIBLE ALLIES

Although our Rationalist friends are our first and most obvious allies, they by no means exhaust the field of possible co-operators in this great task of building up a world movement of ethical religion. At this point, it may be useful again to draw on the wisdom of our early leaders. Dr. Adler made it clear that while an Ethical Society must adhere to its basis in human reason and experience, it should welcome the co-operation, if not the fellowship, of others equally devoted to the moral ideal but who yet find some value in a theistic belief. There is an infinite variety of creeds in different stages of evolution. Even in the Catholic Church, tendencies towards a more rational (or, as our Rationalist friends might prefer it, a less irrational) outlook have been shown from time to time, and such tendencies are much more pronounced in the Anglican and other Protestant churches with which we in Great Britain are familiar. Some denominations, such as the Unitarians and the Society of Friends, which have no fully developed theology like that of the more conventional Christian churches, are even more advanced in the direction of a humanist ethics.

But in the background of these organized groups, from some of which the Ethical movement might draw a measure of friendly

co-operation, if not complete collaboration, lies the great number of active-minded and well-disposed men and women in all lands (whether they can be counted in thousands or millions we cannot say) who have worked out on the basis of the human experience embodied in our common social heritage, without the aid of priest or church, an ethical religion of their own. In the absence of communion with like-minded people for the clarification of their thought and purpose, their conceptions may be vague and ill formulated, and, lacking that vital sense of "fellowship in the moral ideal," this great mass of humanist goodwill may be largely discouraged and ineffective. Nevertheless, world circumstances may render this body of opinion very responsive to any well-considered attempt at organization. The war has promoted a ferment of ideas with regard to human rights and social duties and purposes. Post-war events, instead of leading to the peaceful and constructive development of these ideas, has only created a sense of frustration, with weakened faith in existing institutions, religious as well as political and economic. While the world situation thus provokes a great deal of negativism and pessimism, as well as escapism of various kinds (which explains the relative success of Roman Catholicism, Christian Science, and other irrational answers to the problems of life), it also tends to render the comman man readier than before to listen to any comprehensive *reasonable* view of life, which makes some sense of his difficulties at home, in the workshop or in the polling station, despite the complexities of politics and economics which bewilder him.

THE CLASH OF IDEOLOGIES

Two powerful ideologies alone are likely to dispute with Humanism the claim to be a world religion: Soviet-Communism and the Roman Catholic Church. It would be contrary to the whole spirit and purpose of this contribution to take a merely negative view of either of these contending views. So far as the Catholic Church is concerned, like other theistic religions, it makes its contribution to ethics and while its deplorable history of intolerant persecution and other crimes against humanity admit of no excuse, its adherents again and again show themselves superior in their moral life to its official policy. The case of Soviet-Communism is more complex, and its aspect as a quasi-religious force, although recognized, has been given little analysis, so that it is desirable to make a few though probably inadequate comments. The title is deliberately chosen to distinguish a particular system of thought and policy from Marxian Socialism or the more general concept of Communism. Whatever justification there may have been for

associating either of them with the Russian Revolution ceased at Lenin's death, and the subsequent course of the Revolution demands a new and distinctive description. Notwithstanding, however, the painful betrayals of human rights and political freedom which have accompanied the later phases of Soviet rule, especially in its pervasive control of all aspects of life in the states of Eastern Europe within its power, it still must be recognized that Soviet-Communism has a constructive beneficent purpose in its breaking the chains of landlordism and capitalism, and making possible for the peoples concerned social security and a higher standard of life than they previously enjoyed. Similarly, it must be admitted that wrong policies pursued by the United States and British Governments have contributed to the Russian Government's suspicions, and thus helped to build the fatal Iron Curtain which divides the world. It is therefore not against Marxian Socialism or Communism, still less against the people of Russia and her allies, that this critical view of the Soviet-Communist ideology is directed. Such criticism as is implied lies solely on the heads of those who develop and pursue the practical application of this ideology.

The coercive apparatus of Soviet-Communism has so fastened itself on our imagination through press propaganda that we are apt to forget that the greatest source of its power is mainly mental, indirectly and subconsciously exercised in three ways:

(a) the alleged certitudes of dialectical materialism as a complete philosophy of life, with a scientific basis and interpretation;

(b) complete identification of the individual with the life of the State;

(c) unquestioning loyalty to the leader (or controlling committee) as a condition of political and economic security from alleged encircling enemies.

Roman Catholicism makes a subtler appeal in which the aesthetic and emotional are skilfully blended, but essentially it is the same offer of certainty and comfort to the bewildered man appalled at the complexity and dangers of life and shirking responsibility in the settlement of his personal and social duties. The Church answers all his problems and only asks his unquestioning acceptance of its authority.

THE ANSWER OF HUMANISM

Can Humanism draw on equally fundamental human instincts, experience, and needs to make an equally effective appeal? Its certainties, though less obvious, lie deeper in a satisfied conscience and its balance of personal and social life in a more soundly integrated community, while its democratic functioning creates a profounder and more enduring unity than any emotional allegiance

to leader or oligarchy. Its relative strength is enhanced by the failure of any possible alternative to meet the needs of the modern world. From an international point of view, Soviet-Communism has developed a fatal weakness in prostituting Socialism—essentially an international ideal—to the selfish national interests of Russia, hence the attempted suppression of Yugoslav autonomy. Similar weaknesses are developing in its degradation of Science and Art—again essentially international in nature—to limited national state purposes. Its most vital weakness is its disregard for the sanctity of the human personality and a free mental life. The Roman Catholic Church has corresponding weaknesses, better camouflaged, such as its marked tendency to be dominated by the Italian hierarchy, its complete absence of democratic control, and its dangerous invasion of freedom of thought through education and other means. Humanism is strong precisely at these points. Its international character should be self-evident; it is uncompromising in its adherence to the free and full exercise of reason and in its respect for personality as well as for social co-operation and solidarity.

WHAT THEN SHOULD WE DO?

It will not be expected in this preliminary, very tentative, approach to a vast task that any writer will be prepared with a detailed plan of action. Some indications have been given of possible allies in the building up of a world-wide humanist religious movement, and of some of the great difficulties which attend such an enterprise. Perhaps it is also possible to suggest some of the ways in which the existing ethical and humanist organizations in each country might develop their functions so as to focus attention on the fundamental and international character of the movement. To a far greater extent than was possible in Dr. Adler's day, it is clear that the economic and political problems of mankind dominate the religious field, and it is a mark of his genius that he saw the necessity of the Ethical Movement facing them, not as a party, but as an organized conscience. While each country will have its own particular situation and problems, there are many of the latter common to a great part of the world. Even in Great Britain, regarded as the "Mother of Parliaments", we are conscious of the need for fresh thinking about the principles and practice of democracy in industry as well as in politics to ensure that every member of the community has a responsible sense of participation in social life, not confined to an occasional visit to the polling station. Widespread is the tendency to greater social equality, with all the adjustments of established traditions and values which this implies. The coloured races are on the march towards self-govern-

ment and the realization of their human rights. These profound changes cannot long be halted by the reactionary elements in our society, and we forward-looking Humanists, so far from wishing to impede them, should be in the forefront to give them sympathy, encouragement and wise counsel.

This conception of our rôle emphasizes that Ethical Religion is essentially a social creation and embraces the general view of Society we know as Socialism with its elements of freedom, fraternity, and social justice. Its Socialism is not that of a political party absorbed in the technical tasks of framing or implementing a specific programme, but that of the guardian of a social philosophy and conscience, critical of purposes and effects rather than of detailed methods. A special importance attaches to this frank acceptance of the moral necessity for profound social changes in our attitude to Soviet-Communism. Let us not be put in the false ethical position of denying the good of many of the social changes effected by Russia and her allies: our only valid criticism is that these values are vitiated, if not destroyed, by a system which denies elementary human rights.

It is equally important that we should think out more earnestly than ever before our technique of approach to the man in the street. We must frankly confess that the Ethical and Humanist movements are at present largely confined to a small section of the so-called cultured middle class. But this is the Century of the Common Man, and its religion must be that of the common man. Humanism must be preached as a religion, not lectured as in a university class room. Its advocates must be people who not only accept it as an intellectual proposition, but passionately *believe* in it, so strongly that they want others to share in its deep satisfactions. Its teachings must be directly related to the practical realities of personal and social life, with no timid fears of raising controversial issues. Morals are essentially controversial. We need a dynamic sense of what Dr. Coit called "Ethical Democracy." The common man should feel that his domestic, employment, and political problems will all be lightened in the Ethical Fellowship or the Humanist Church, that difficult though it may be to understand some of the complexities of human destiny, of psychological analysis, of the economic situation or of international affairs, nevertheless some helpful constructive guidance will be found in this broad human movement.

Let us above all have the courage of our convictions. Admitted that as a Movement we are at present few in numbers and poor in resources and the task suggested is vast in scope. Yet there are great resources available, if we only look for them and know how to

use them. Every man and woman born into the world is the heir to a common social heritage which, varied as its contents may be from land to land, yet contains all the essential elements of the conscience, which is our common link, the world over. Despite the plausibility and established power of the supernatural religions, there are countless numbers who stand on their own moral feet but at present vainly seek the comfort and strength of religious fellowship. We have our own organizations, limited as they may be and stronger as they might be with greater unity and co-operation. We have possible allies, had we the enterprise to invite their help. But best of all we have our principles, genuinely international, wholly democratic, a full recognition that the moral life is social as much as personal, embracing the Socialist ideals of social justice, freedom, and fraternity as well as the noblest conceptions of personality, the light which the common man seeks in a dark world.. What more do we want to call us to action?

J. HENRY LLOYD

RICHARD JEFFERIES

THOUGH it was principally about country life, country things, and the countryside that Richard Jefferies wrote, he published a book in 1883 that has to this day a value and a significance for all who are interested in the sincere outpourings of the spirit, and who are in sympathy with an intensity of feeling, personal and humanitarian, elevated to a religion. That book, *The Story of My Heart,* a "remarkable spiritual autobiography" as the Oxford Companion to English Literature calls it, was written when he was but 34 years old. It would be untrue to say that it has not had its critics, among whom can be placed such high-ranking literary figures as D. H. Lawrence and W. H. Hudson. Both these writers confessed that they did not like it, Hudson going so far as to describe it as "that strain of intense and unnatural feeling which he so strangely misinterprets, and which in *The Story of My Heart* touches the borders of insanity."

My reaction to it is different. Despite the repetitions, the saying of the same thing in different ways, from which the book suffers, I think that anyone who takes the trouble to read it sympathetically will find in it much of intrinsic and abiding worth. Its prose style, though sometimes awkward, is always poetical and at times, as in the opening words of the book, is appealingly beautiful:

> The story of my heart commences seventeen years ago. In the glow of youth there were times every now and then when I felt the necessity of a strong inspiration of soul-thought. My heart was dusty, parched for the want of the rain of deep feeling;

my mind arid and dry, for there is dust which settles on the heart as well as that which falls on a ledge. It is injurious to the mind as well as to the body to be always in one place and always surrounded by the same circumstances. A species of thick clothing slowly grows about the mind, the pores are choked, little habits become a part of existence, and by degrees the mind is inclosed in a husk. When this began to form I felt eager to escape from it, to throw it off like heavy clothing, to drink deeply once more at the fresh fountains of life. An inspiration—a long deep breath of the pure air of thought—could alone give health to the heart.

The book is not, as might be thought from its title, Richard Jefferies' life story. The material circumstances of his life find oblique and scant mention. I would describe it as an attempt by a solitary and sensitive soul—a nature mystic—to express himself; to express his innermost feelings, desires, hopes, thoughts, yearnings. It is a statement of personal philosophy, however incoherent and patchy it may seem in parts to be.

Jefferies has sometimes been called a Pantheist in religion; but I cannot help feeling that this is an inept and misleading description. He was in fact an Atheist, and any reference to his *Story of My Heart* can leave one in no doubt. It had been his wont from boyhood to roam the quiet and solitary places of his native countryside, and his prolonged and intimate contemplation of nature leads him to exclaim, "There is nothing human in the whole round of nature. All nature, all the universe that we can see, is absolutely indifferent to us, and except to us human life is of no more value than grass." And elsewhere: "Centuries of thought have failed to reconcile and fit the mind to the universe, which is designless and purposeless and without idea." It is not therefore surprising that, thinking thus, he is led to conclude that "no deity has anything to do with nature. There is no god in nature, nor in any matter anywhere, either in the clods on the earth or in the composition of the stars. For what we understand by the deity is the purest form of Idea, of Mind, and no mind is exhibited in these. That which controls them is distinct altogether from deity . . . a power quite different from anything yet imagined. I cease, therefore, to look for deity in nature or the cosmos at large, or to trace any marks of divine handiwork."

In different ways Jefferies keeps on with such assertions throughout his book. That confession of disbelief does not, however, make him a rationalist. He was, as I have hinted, a mystic in a certain definite sense, and, like all mystics, is difficult at times to follow. He uses such words as "soulthought"—that occurs in the first few

lines of his book, which I have quoted — and "prayer" very frequently; but as he himself explains, "By prayer I do not mean a request preferred to a deity; I mean intense soul-emotion, intense aspiration." When out in the open—in the fields, amongst the hills, close to the sea—he felt a great upsurge of spirit; he went into raptures; he hankered after an understanding that transcended the ordinary limitations of the human mind. In his ecstasy he sought a fuller "soul-life": "I know that there are ideas beyond the valley of my thought; I know that there is something infinitely higher than deity." When a man talks thus, of course, he becomes incomprehensible, although one may follow him to a point.

Some argue* that Jefferies was a learned man. I do not personally think he was. But, be that as it may, he had a self-confessed dislike of much of book knowledge. Hence his thought is almost everywhere in *The Story* rough-hewn and unrefined. He is contemptuous not only of the idea (beloved of theologians and Christian apologists) of design in nature, but of the concept of evolution itself. His dogmatism is a trifle disturbing. He carries it to lengths of absurdity:

> This our earth this day produces sufficient for our existence. This our earth produces not only a sufficiency but a superabundance, and pours a cornucopia of good things down upon us. Further, it produces sufficient for stores and granaries to be filled to the roof-tree for years ahead . . .

We who live in a later and better informed age, when the science of Ecology is painting so grim a picture of our human kind in relation to our environment, know how fallacious is this statement. But perhaps Jefferies is in part to be excused; he was probably echoing some of the bland and confident, and often ill-founded, assertions that were not uncommon in his day.

A shy and lonely man, was Jefferies, a simple, nature-loving soul who hated, with all the fervour of his being, cant and hypocrisy, and all the misplaced sense of importance that so commonly goes with the possession of money, place, and power. "The pageantry of power, the still more foolish pageantry of wealth, the senseless precedence of place: words fail me to express my utter contempt for such pleasure or such ambitions."

Jefferies had known near-poverty in his early days in London and had felt some of its bitter pangs. Being an acutely sensitive soul, this had done much to give him an instinctive sympathy with the downtrodden; and in his *Story of My Heart* this reveals itself very clearly. "Why do people die of starvation, or lead a miserable

* For instance, Mr. Samuel J. Looker in his Introduction to *The Old House at Coate, and other hitherto unpublished essays*, by Richard Jefferies. Lutterworth Press, 1948.

existence on the verge of it?" he asks with fierce indignation. "Why have millions upon millions to toil from morning to evening just to gain a mere crust of bread?" And answers: "Because of the absolute lack of organization by which such labour should produce its effect; the absolute lack of distribution; the absolute lack of the very idea that such things are possible." And we must remember that when Jefferies wrote these words social and economic conditions in this country were far from what they are to-day, so much have we advanced.

We find Jefferies writing vehemently against the evil of hard and unmitigated toil; we find him exclaiming angrily against the idea that work is man's noblest pursuit, which was the expressed view of Thomas Carlyle before him. He saw work—or, at least, much of it—as a bondage of the unprivileged, perpetuating gross ignorance, crushing the spirit, robbing the all-too-few years of human life of its savour, its natural happiness and simple joy. For the well-to-do and leisured rich he had harsh words. They were the "criminal classes," presumably because of their smug complacence with the existing social order and its attendant evils, if not always because of their industrial exploitation of the working classes. "Food and drink, roof and clothes," declares Jefferies in the same indignant vein, "are the inalienable right of every child born into the light."

He saw leisure as a great good, finding in it the means whereby the mind could be expanded and the soul enlarged, and the health and well-being of the physical body enhanced. He was essentially an idealist; he looked forward to the time when the common folk would have leisure enough, and the means, to "enjoy their days, and the earth, and the beauty of this beautiful world." And he makes an avowal, with a sincerity that we cannot doubt, that in order to achieve this he is willing to divide and share all he would ever have; while confessing, "though I think that the end will rather be gained by organization than by sharing alone." Whether he personally enjoyed a great degree of happiness in his own brief life is arguable; but he was in essence an advocate and a disciple of happiness. It was the outcome of all his experience and self-questioning and philosophy that happiness in this life and in this world is of supreme account. He saw with an anguish that is very real and touching that this life is so pitifully short, so full of natural and inescapable tragedy, with no promise of a redemption beyond the grave. The tombstones themselves, under which lie the silent dead, have a message for us, bidding us " . . . now know the extreme value of human life; reflect on this and strew human life with flowers; save every hour for the sunshine; let your labour be

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LAMP-POSTS IN CHELSEA

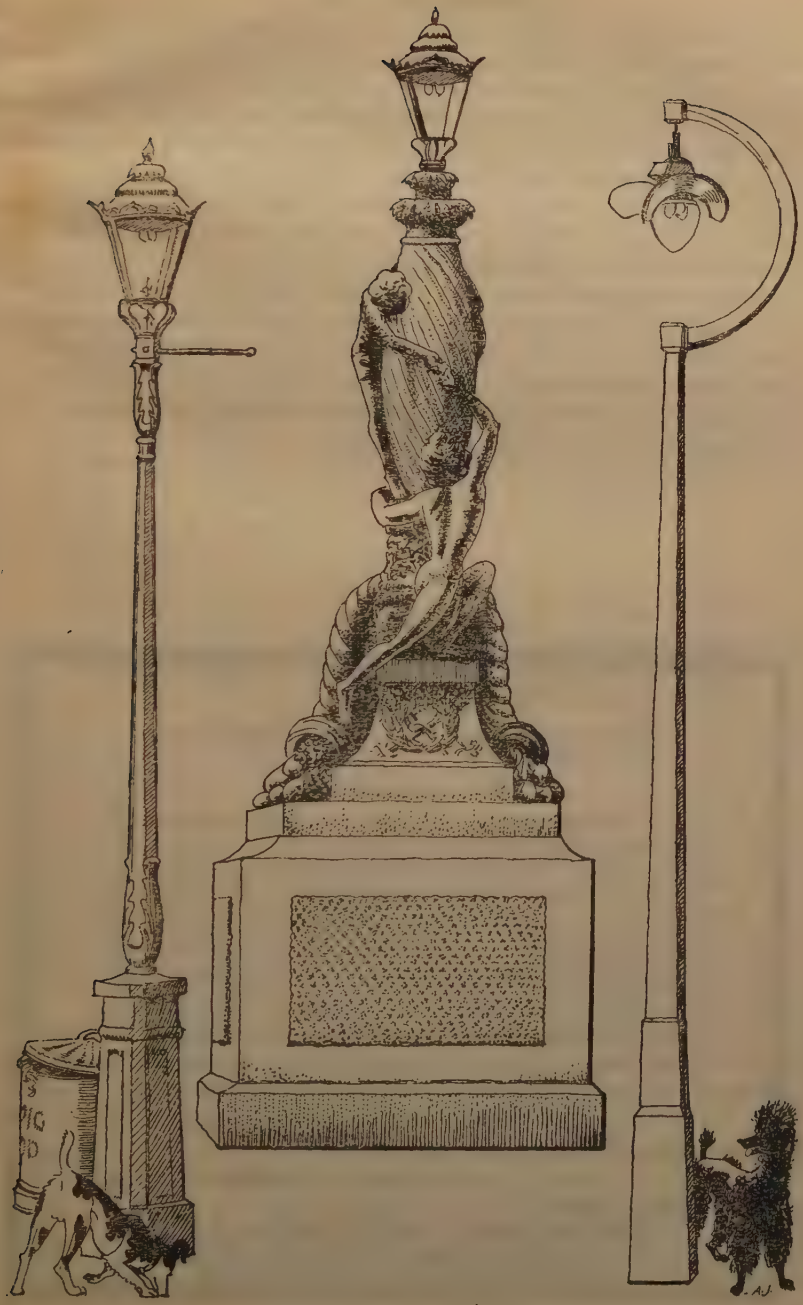
ON the whole, lamp-posts deserve and receive no comment. We are at home with, and are unlikely to turn a critical eye upon, the Victorian pattern which studs the side-streets of the towns. If we are old enough we may have an affectionate regard for these very commonplace objects because of the part they played in a minor drama we have so often watched from the nursery window on late winter afternoons: the lamplighter, a dignified figure, with his long stick, pausing at each dark post and leaving it with a star at the top. In some districts this is still enacted; but the part of the lamplighter is miscast: he is any characterless young man on a bicycle.

Presuming that the public is not so very conscious of lamp-posts, this note would like to call attention to a really good modern lamp-post. It is both very simple and very subtle in design, the proportions being so satisfactory that it deserves to be looked at in many views, as if it were a piece of sculpture. The curve at the top, so practical in itself, is linearly a joy in juxtaposition with buildings mostly constructed of straight lines. This lamp-post can be seen against the æsthetically exciting large blocks of flats forming Wiltshire Close (Draycott Avenue, Chelsea), designed by Edward Armstrong, F.R.I.B.A.

The street lighting authorities ordained that the new lamp-posts (now unhappily officially called street lighting columns) should not overhang the road at this point; probably because the tall vans of John Lewis are housed opposite. They chose a lamp-post, designed by C. A. Marques, M.B.E., A.M.I.Struct.E., from a sheet of some six or eight designs supplied by Concrete Utilities, Ltd. (the pendant lamp comes from another firm, Sugg). The sheet shows several overhanging patterns which have already proved popular and are to be seen in numbers in the London suburbs; they are rather pretty and feeble in design. These were luckily ineligible and the authorities chose the best of the non-overhanging designs.

In these hard days when there is no money to spend on extras one may be very glad to know that a beautiful little lamp-post with its reflectors set for usefulness, which please the eye as do the petals of a flower, can be put up at the cost of a few pounds; and, if one dare hazard a guess, at a quarter or a sixth of the price of those grandiflorum horrors, lavish with urchins and cornucopias, on Chelsea embankment half a mile away.

U.E.



(*Continued from page* 213)

so ordered that in future times the loved ones may dwell longer with those who love them; open your minds; exalt your souls; widen the sympathies of your hearts; face the things that are now as you will face the reality of death; make joy real now to those who you love and help forward the joy of those yet to be born. Let these facts force the mind and the soul to an increase of thought . . . so that those whose time it is to die may have enjoyed all that is possible in life." Four years or so after he penned those words he himself died at the tragically young age of 38.

Some will remember him for the signal contribution he made to our literature of the English countryside, on which his larger fame rests. But we, whose interests are humanitarian rather than literary, will, while acknowledging his undoubted merits as a writer and an observer of country life, prefer to know him as a man with a personal philosophy that is an inspiration still.

G. I. BENNETT

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BOOK REVIEWS

HUMANISM AS A PHILOSOPHY. By Corliss Lamont. pp. 370. Philosophical Library, New York, $3.75.

This book is invaluable to humanists in Great Britain at the moment. The uninhibited ease with which it puts forward all the humanist arguments without compromise and the buoyant zest with which it reviews the thought of humanists in Greece, Rome, Renaissance Europe, eighteenth century France, nineteenth century Western Europe and America, all come as a lungful of oxygen to climbers who have been breathing ten times to every step on a high mountain. In England we are on the defensive in restating the humanist position adequately against a rising tide of pessimism and of revealed supernatural religion. Now from America comes a great draught of human common sense, competently expressed by one well versed in philosophy and science. It has not the intensity of a person at grips with the alternative between suicide and life. It radiates the desire to live a full and happy life, but also the desire to give a full and happy life to all.

The author has already published a book on the illusion of immortality and an attack upon the conception of immortality is central to his theme in this book, even more so than the rejection of the idea of God. Characteristically the section which deals with immortality is called, "This life is all and enough." Yet the author is not heartless or blind to suffering and frustration. He rejects all attempts to preserve the words God and immortality by giving them rarified meanings which confuse thought. He is not afraid of being called crude or irreligious or optimistic. Here is a man who is not brow-beaten or anxious to be approved, but who is confident and anxious to make masses of his fellow men openly adopt the philosophy of humanists. He is not unduly optimistic, yet has the buoyancy of a country which is not exhausted and desperately seeking a lost hold on life. He has enough creative hope and vigour to call men to accept this world and this life as all they will ever know and to give themselves to making the best of it.

One warning should be given. The first chapter is by far the weakest and could well be skimmed, but on no account should the reader decide not to read the rest of the book. Some people will find the section on "Humanism's Theory of the Universe" a bit difficult and long in dealing with philosophic and scientific thought, but others will find much enlightenment just here.

The style of the book is vivid, though the content is not always easy, and unforgettable concrete illustrations are given: so that those readers who feel lost in an account of scientific method will

remember exactly how yellow fever was stamped out in Cuba and feel the grandeur of all the human qualities which were involved in this triumph. It is infinitely worth while reading those parts of the book which do appeal to one, for much of the whole is in each section and all along are helpful arguments which stand on their own feet. In his last section on the Ethics of Humanism and the Social Good the author shows he is as little overwhelmed by half-baked psychologists and capitalists as he is by overcooked theologians.

VIRGINIA FLEMMING

SCIENTIFIC AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND OTHER PAPERS. By Max Planck. With a Memorial Address on Max Planck by Max Von Laue. Translated by Frank Gaynor. pp. 192. Philosophical Library, New York, $3.75.

PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE. By Moritz Schlick. Translated by Amethe von Zeppelin. pp. 136. Philosophical Library, New York, $3.00.

Scientists of outstanding genius are frequently as simple as children when they venture into philosophy, religion, or politics. To think that this is a modern tragedy, the result of the universal specialism which has divided us into pieces, is a prevalent mistake. Minds are as commanding and comprehensive, and as limited, as ever they were. A study of the note-books of Leonardo da Vinci, so often taken as the example of all-embracing genius, shows that his strong scientific impulse had no philosophic bent or aptitude. One should neither deplore nor expect too much from the ventures of our great and ripe men of science into other fields.

Max Planck, one of the greatest of the great physicists of this great age of physics, devoted to his science and in later years reflecting upon the nature of science and its relationship to religion and to moral problems, welcomed the opportunity given him by invitations to lecture to develop before the general public his ideas on these general questions. One of these papers ("The Concept of Causality in Physics") here so usefully collected and presented in an American translation, appeared in another collection in an English translation some years ago, *The Philosophy of Physics;* but the present collection is more comprehensive and better represents Planck's mature thought on the principal topics of his interest.

In a paper on phantom problems, Planck tries to dispose of the conflict between science and religion and the problem of free will and determinism by treating them on the model of the question whether the wall which is on the right-hand for the lecturer and on the left-hand for the audience is *really* left or right. Undoubtedly

there are meaningless problems, and it is a most useful service of philosophy to dispose of them by cutting away the language in which they consist. Unfortunately it is just as certain that the method has produced meaningless solutions of real problems. God being a Thou, it is meaningless to discuss His existence or non-existence as a third person. The term miracle is meaningless, since there are no miracles to science and to the eye of faith there are no miracles either, because no limit. Each point of view is justified, none is final, and there is complete discontinuity between them. This disingenuous philosophizing so widespread to-day does not get the indignation it deserves. This formal treatment of questions, encouraged by the fruitful substitution in physics of rules for the use of rules in the place of concepts having a meaningful content, has made it too easy to get rid of tiresome problems or to get rid of rational objections to desired positions.

The corrective is in the authority and discipline of logical analysis. The late Moritz Schlick was second to none in the field of the philosophy of science. The revised course of lectures which he was giving in the University of Vienna in the summer of 1936 presented his maturest thought in this main field of his activity. He was shot by a lunatic on his way into the university to give the last of these lectures. The main part of the present book is a translation of the manuscript of this lecture course. It is a relief to turn from the philosophizing of a scientist even so eminent, likeable, and readable as Max Planck to a pupil and friend who passed from physics to the philosophy of physics, and handles his subject with the firmness, precision, and lucidity of a trained philosopher. He rejects as the function of philosophy in relation to science both the attempt at a synthesis of the sciences and a justification of the epistemological foundations of science. Science is concerned with formulating and testing hypotheses, philosophy with the elucidation of their meaning. It is for the working scientists to drive towards a simplification and unification of their several studies, but the working scientist is not in the best position to scrutinize and interpret the laws of nature which he establishes. In physics the old models and pictures of the world have gone, and with them also the familiar psychological understanding of the notions of cause, substance, force, and the like. It is hard to abandon the interpretations furnished by sense experience without abandoning the world. The eminent physicists who have ventured into popular exposition of the new theories and have resorted to vivid and sometimes extravagant comparisons and images have possibly done more harm than good. The approach of Moritz Schlick, which is on an altogether higher level of competence and seriousness, is by its very

reasonableness easier to follow. One of the most brilliant and interesting things in the book is an extract from a paper published elsewhere and here printed as an appendix in which he traces the history of theories of matter from Democritus to the electro-magnetic theory of the present day. There is no need to regard Schlick's interpretations as beyond criticism in order to be intensely grateful for this amazingly lucid and useful piece of work. It is logical positivism seen to best advantage. This is one vital way in which philosophy gives up talking to itself and makes itself serviceable to science and promotes general culture.

THE FIRST EUROPE. By C. Delisle Burns. pp. 684. Allen and Unwin, 25s.

Situated as we are to-day in a civilization with great achievements but threatened with disruption through class and internecine national war, it is not surprising that attention should be turned upon the dissolution of the only civilization really comparable to our own, that of Rome. Delisle Burns is not so much concerned with the break-up of Roman civilization as with the emergence of the new type of social system that was to replace it. The title *The First Europe* refers to the period A.D. 400-800 during which the new system was crystallizing. Burns criticizes the traditional attitude of historians who regard the period as a mere gap between the decline of Rome and the Renaissance. Those who measure the society that followed the break-up of Roman civilization with that civilization itself are, he says, comparing a mountain torrent with a river about to enter the sea. The seeds of a new and a greater civilization were being sowed the fruits of which would be seen a thousand years later. This may be the way in which the matter should be considered, but it is a surprising attitude for a humanist to adopt. The basis of humanism is the belief in man's capacity to control his own destiny without having to accept the necessity of crash landings before taking off on new historical departures. Any humanist thought that existed in the Roman Empire failed to survive its dissolution and there is the same certainty of the disappearance of humanist thought should our own civilization go. Humanism requires fairly smooth water, it cannot, or more accurately put does not, survive tornados. Burns says, as has Toynbee, that historians look at history backwards, but the trouble with Burns is that when he looks forwards at history he does so with the knowledge of what is to come a thousand or more years ahead. This said, one can say that the book is a most valuable

one and also that the author is far from being blind to the defects of the new society.

Burns saw the main advantage of the dissolution of Rome in altered social relationships, the gradual replacement of slavery by serfdom. Serfdom with all its abuses was one round up the ladder towards freedom. The serf being attached to a specific piece of land could form a permanent marital association and rear children. Burns died too soon to have seen the state ownership of peoples threaten the break-up of family life by arbitrary transportations.

There was nothing forward looking about the new society; circumstances produced the need of new attitudes. The early Christian communities were interested in the second coming; their thought and ambitions were not rooted in the secular world which thrust its way in upon them with the breaking up of Roman civilization, with the result that they were backward looking, the ideal being the old Roman society. The church took over the social service side of the Roman civilization, and the temporal authority the traditions of its military organization.

Burns had a very real insight into Roman and post-Roman society, the result of years of study, of residence in Rome, and an intimate acquaintance with the Roman Church, to add to a lifelong interest in social and political problems, qualities which combine to make this work one of unusual importance.

M. L. BURNET

Is Evolution a Myth? A Debate between Douglas Dewar, B.A., F.Z.S., L. Merson Davies, D.Sc., Ph.D., F.G.S., and Professor J. B. S. Haldane, F.R.S. 92 pp. Watts & Paternoster Press, 2s. 6d.

This book is the debate, conducted by correspondence, between the first two authors, representing the New Zealand Branch of the Evolution Protest Movement, and Professor Haldane for the Rationalist Press Association. The first two maintain the necessity for an act, or acts, of special creation. The actual subject of the debate is "Organic evolution, the theory that existing animals and plants, and also mankind, are descended from simple forms of life."

If there is a good case for dismissing evolution in favour of belief in some act or acts of special creation, it is unfortunate that the case has not been put. The technique has been to state that some claims supporting the Darwinian theory of evolution are open to doubt, or are not true. Haldane effectively deals with all, or most, of these. But suppose that some few out of the very many statements made in support of organic evolution proved to be false, this does not thereby prove that the theory is false. The basis is only proved not to be quite so wide or sound as is claimed.

Many will imagine that a doctorate of science conjoined with a doctorate in philosophy must mean that the person concerned has a scientific and philosophical frame of mind. They will find the contribution of the geologist, Colonel Davies, of interest. He affirms that "any doctrine of organic evolution inevitably postulates unbroken genetic connections between existing creatures and their supposed ancestors." This is reasonable enough, but later he writes, "I demanded direct evidence of genetic connection between any two supposed FOSSIL ancestors." It appears that when, as often happens, a cat has kittens, and no direct evidence of "genetic connection" exists, then Colonel Davies will not rule out some special act of creation. Most scientists and philosophers would postulate that "genetic connection" has occurred with another cat. Haldane remarks, "You demand 'direct evidence' of genetical connection between two fossils. The only possible direct evidence could be the evidence of two fossils mating, or one bringing forth another! So you are quite safe."

Mr. Dewar gives a more reasonable series of objections to the simple materialistic conception of evolution. In connection with special acts of creation he brings the tapeworm into prominence. Haldane gives effective replies to most of the queries raised by Dewar. He also comments that the argument that "smallpox, malaria, tape-worms, and so on, had an intelligent designer, leads on to polytheism or diabolism; certainly not to the view that this designer is also morally perfect." He writes, however, "I agree with you that some processes, such as the evolution of the mammalian ear bones, probably occurred by sudden leaps . . . It is never, however, necessary to postulate a leap which would imply prevision by a designer."

All who are interested in evolution ought to read this book. Many of the technicalities will be outside the range of their knowledge, but the general content of the arguments is easily grasped. One sound reason for reading the book is given by Haldane, who writes, "Our correspondence, by forcing me to read far more than I have quoted, and to examine fossils, has strengthened me in the conclusion that the theory of evolution is the only one that will account for the known facts."

Two comments by Haldane are vastly intriguing: "I do not believe that animals are merely machines" and "I have deliberately left it vague how evolution occurs. Provided the existing species are descended from very different ones, evolution is a fact. I am more of a Darwinist than some contemporaries." Will these one day expand into a book for our guidance?

J. GUILFOYLE WILLIAMS

THE HUMANIST WAY, Vol. IV, No. 1, 1949-50. A Quarterly Journal edited by M. N. Roy. Renaissance Publishers, Calcutta, 5s.

THE RATIONALIST ANNUAL FOR 1950. Edited by Frederick Watts. Watts, 2s. 6d.

With this issue the name of *The Marxian Way,* after three years, is changed to *The Humanist Way,* and the editor explains why. The original name expressed the conviction of the founders that the humanist and materialist tradition in which Marx stands and to which he gave new impetus is the right outlook and true orientation for the human spirit. There is no change in this conviction, but the editor as a man of deep thought and wide experience recognizes that Marxism has not developed but has remained imprisoned in economic determinism. "The positive elements of Marxism, freed from its fallacies and clarified in the light of greater scientific knowledge, are consistent with a more comprehensive philosophy which can be called Integral or Radical Humanism: a philosophy which combines mechanistic cosmology, materialist metaphysics, secular rationalism and rationalist ethics, to satisfy man's urge for freedom and quest for truth, and also to guide his future action in pursuit of the same ideals. Clearly visualised, the Marxian way merges into the Humanist way. Therefore we have decided to change the name of this journal." We share this standpoint closely enough to welcome this avowal and to hope that we may join hands in helping to promote and develop a modern humanism capable of carrying forward and enriching the great tradition we acknowledge.

The Rationalist Annual gives us the usual miscellany of essays by eminent rationalists who express whatever they have in their minds or on their minds. This time there is an even division between matters of both kinds, all expressed very readably.

ROUND THE YEAR WITH THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS. By Royston Pike. With four plates in colour, and many drawings by E. C. Mansell. pp. 204. Watts, 10s. 6d. School edition, 6s.

To saunter leisurely through the year continuously entertained with wayside matters is a wholly delightful way of filling odd moments or spending an hour or two. The children for whom Mr. Pike's book is primarily intended will deal differently with it: backwards and forwards and over and over, in the way that children do read anything that appeals to them. And there is no doubt about the appeal, judging from the squeaks of one nine-year guinea pig on whom this review copy was tried. But, like boats

on the Round Pond, there are some books for children that enslave their elders. The mythical and ritualistic elaboration with which all peoples have stressed and caressed the occasions and seasons of mortal life has an inexhaustible interest, because close to the original secrets of the human mind and open to so many points of view.

Some of the pleasantest browsing in literature is the fruit of back-breaking toil. Robert Chambers lost his health in the labour of preparing the material for the two volumes of that great antiquarian miscellany the *Book of Days*. That was pioneer work, filling the reservoir. Mr. Pike's book reads as though it was as pleasant to write as it is to read. We hope it has been so.

KAREL HYNECK MACHA. May and other poems, with selected prose and letters, and a biographical study by the translator, Hugh Hamilton McGoverne. Orbis-Prague.

It is pleasant to find a work of pure literature amongst the load of propaganda sent out by a foreign government in the way of business. Except in his fervent nationalism, Mácha is as remote as possible from the passions and problems of the modern world, and belongs to the romantic movement of the early nineteenth century; yet he was never more loved and celebrated than in his own country to-day. The English translation is a labour of love carried out during the war in a German concentration camp. Such poetry does not bear translation, and the translator has unfortunately allowed himself to use hackneyed romantic diction; and yet the poet comes through and is flesh and blood under this alien dress. The themes are spontaneously those of the early romantic movement, young unhappy love, untimely or grisly death, the loveliness of the natural world, national freedom. If Mácha is compared with our own romantic poets, the difference seems to be that the texture of his own personality and human existence is nearer to that of his own wild dreams, which gives to his work the quality of his own presence, so different from the elaborate richness of a wrought work. Here is the human fever, doomed but brilliant and haunting.

CORRESPONDENCE

Pacifism

I was sorry to find that, in his rejection of Pacifism, Mr. G. I. Bennett appeals to fear of insecurity. A dispassionate treatment (which *The Plain View* encourages us to expect), while taking account of this emotion and of the likelihood that many will be swayed by it, will not acquiesce in a purely emotional reaction.

A Pacifism which imagines that aggressive dictators (or aggressive neighbours for that matter!) will shortly be softened by it is certainly "naïvely unrealistic", and unfortunately there is a considerable amount of such untried, rosy pacifism about. But mature Pacifism does not work on this assumption. It knows that the immediate consequences may involve loss of security, privation and perhaps suffering and that these may endure in some cases for a lifetime, both for oneself and for one's own. It is realistic. It is idealistic also in that it believes its witness and suffering contribute towards the creation of a subsequent ideal society, whether or not those who "die in the faith" live personally to "receive the promises." Mature Pacifism may also be actuated by a humble spirit of atonement, such as prompted Albert Schweitzer to give his entire energies to the Dark Continent as some small atonement for the wrongs doné to it by generations of white exploiters. But always the attitude is positive, realistic and suffering. It looks to the ultimate well-being of mankind as a whole, not just to that of one's own immediate relatives or fellow-countrymen. If it sees of the travail of its soul sooner than it expected, I am sure Mr. Bennett will be humanistic enough to rejoice with it.

W. ARNOLD HALL

Marxism

In the early days of *The Plain View* Mr. Blackham's articles gave the impression that if he were not a socialist he leaned towards socialism, but judging from more recent contributions of his, he seems to have veered right round and to advocate a State-controlled private enterprise economy. If this is so I and others would be curious to see where the development of such a system would lead to.

To change one's opinion is often a proof of moral strength, but when one occupying the position of a leader does change his, the followers are entitled to know the reason; I hope therefore that Mr. Blackham will give a reasoned explanation for I can hardly assume that a rationalist and leader of an ethical organization would allow himself to be influenced to that extent by the masses

of lies circulated by the reactionary warmongers through their servile press.

I would also be interested in a straight answer to the views expressed by Messrs. Archibald Robertson and John Murphy in the April 1949 issue of *The Plain View*. J. WESTON

(Admiral Weston invites me to be frank, and I will be. I have consistently and actively supported the British Labour Party for more than twenty years, and intend to do so in the immediate future. My political philosophy (which others might find consistent with different practical conclusions) is too frequently expressed in this journal (not least in this issue) to bear re-statement here. In my articles on Marxism, I attempted a critical examination of the theoretical foundations, and my arguments give my reasons for my views. I would willingly have replied to Archibald Robertson and John Murphy if they had said anything of which I had not already taken full account before I wrote. Mr. Robertson found what I had to say so distasteful that he liked to think it was bilge. That shows how unprofitable argument is on this matter. And really there is nothing to argue about, for the issue is not a theoretical question of who can solve the problems of modern industrial civilization, but a practical question of who will. I am neither convinced nor intimidated by the Marxist certainty that what we now call social democracy is doomed to failure. I do recognize that if it does succeed Communism is disarmed, although not displaced. On the other hand, if it does fail I am ready (if alive) to reconsider the Communist alternative. It is as simple as all that. H.J.B.)

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